

The Shearin Group Leadership Training Tips to Help Put "Thanks" and "Giving"

5 Tips to Help Put "Thanks" and "Giving" Back In Thanksgiving

It's that time of year again. So, why is this money expert, who [provides financial advice](#) to Baby Boomers and their offspring, writing about Thanksgiving? Because the "giving" part of money is key to any money discussion (and I love Thanksgiving and this is my blog!)

I'm not alone when it comes to my love for the Thanksgiving holiday. According to CNN.com, Thanksgiving is America's second favorite holiday after Christmas. And, thanks to editor of Ladies Magazine, Sarah Josepha Hale's 36 year advocacy, Thanksgiving is a national holiday that falls on the fourth Thursday every November as proclaimed by President Abraham Lincoln in 1863. It's a day of indulgence for approximately 88 percent of Americans who will consume over 45 million turkeys (not including the one that President Obama will spare). But what about the remaining folks who are not as lucky to be stuffing birds and their faces with friends and family?

Thanksgiving is my favorite holiday because it really is integral to the American culture, non-commercial and inclusive. (I will note that "non-commercial" takes on a new twist when you see the number of stores opening on Thanksgiving.) My hope is that families are celebrating the same thoughts of gratitude for our collective bounty. It should also be a time to reflect and to give thanks.

To be honest, I've always felt sorry for Thanksgiving being "stuffed in" between Halloween, the scary costume and sugar holiday, and Christmas the holiday of joy that has morphed into the holiday of the shopping spree. Now it's time to revive the essence of Thanksgiving and turn it into "Thanks" and "Giving" for you and your next generation. Here are five [tips](#) to reclaim the spirit of the Thanksgiving holiday:

Tip #1 – Tell The Story

In my home, we start the meal by designating a family member as the storyteller to tell the grandkids about the origins of the holiday. It's not only about football, parades, turkey, cranberry sauce and my way too sweet, sweet potatoes. I'll make it easy for you: Thanksgiving has its roots dating back to the Pilgrims celebrating their first harvest in the "New World" in 1621. (Obviously, the harvest took place earlier, but you know how hard it is to nail down the origin of a holiday!) This feast was said to last for three days and to be attended by 90 Native Americans and 53 Pilgrims. The holiday was religious in nature and thanks was given to God for survival and the prosperity that was enjoyed. The Pilgrims didn't have it easy their first few years in this country. They made seven times more graves than houses, but still they were able to set this time aside to give thanks.

Tip #2 – Share Your Family

Welcome a person or family to your Thanksgiving dinner. It is a simple, but powerful gesture. It's also a great way to establish a family tradition of real unity behind a common purpose and to set the example to share your family and its good fortune. As William Shakespeare said, "Small cheer and great welcome makes a merry feast." Each year, we try to invite someone who doesn't have family with whom to share the holiday. Get the kids involved in that discussion prior to the meal. It may be one of their teachers, who is far from home, or a neighbor, or someone from a foreign country who has never experienced the holiday.

Tip #3 – Share With Others

Sharing needs to be built into a ritual for this holiday. It's a core component to the celebration. Celebrate what you, as a family, have done this year. There are many great causes to which to donate. There are local shelters, food banks, and even organizations like Amp Your Good, where you can go online to make donations that will be turned into food for those in need. The big thing is to get the kids involved in the donations. If you can fit in the time, take your offspring to a shelter and have the whole family donate, prepare, and serve food. The experience is invaluable and it will be incredibly empowering for your kids to directly give their time, as well as money to those less fortunate. Frankly, recognizing

that others are less not well-off, and doing something about it, is a key element in this celebration—I firmly believe, in fact, that the celebration is hollow without it. Teddy Roosevelt said it well, “Let us remember that, as much has been given us, much will be expected from us, and that true homage comes from the heart as well as from the lips, and shows itself in deeds.”

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